

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 9001

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Memphis 13.

WHEREAS, on May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated schools were unconstitutional. Chief Justice Earl Warren read the 2,000-word opinion, which concluded that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." One year later, in *Brown v. Board of Education (II)*, the high court ordered lower federal courts to implement desegregation plans "with all deliberate speed"; and

WHEREAS, sixty years ago this month in 1961, thirteen African-American first graders took courageous steps to enter four formerly all-White elementary schools and break the practice of segregation in Memphis City Schools; and

WHEREAS, the thirteen first-grade students who bravely entered the doors of Bruce, Gordon, Rozelle, and Springdale Elementary Schools were Sheila Malone Conway, E.C. Freeman Fentress, Alvin Freeman, Deborah Holt, Dwania Kyles, Sharon Malone, Pamela Mayes, Jacqueline Moore, Joyce Bell White, Leandrew Wiggins, Clarence Williams, Harry Williams, and Michael Willis (Menelik Fombi); and

WHEREAS, at a time when the nation was witnessing widespread segregation and animosity toward African Americans who desired equal opportunities, these young civil rights leaders and their families made a choice to take a step toward equality for all; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor those courageous individuals, the Memphis 13, who integrated public schools sixty years ago and applaud their efforts on the behalf of equality for all.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.